

An introduction to the goblet of blood

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If you are a vampire, congratulations you have been clickbaited. However, if you are a female, who got yelled at by your mother for staining the bed sheet or had your favourite dress painted red, there is a magic cup that will save you and the environment.

Menstrual cups are bell-shaped silicone/latex/rubber with a stem at the bottom, which is inserted through the vagina and remains sealed against the vaginal walls below the cervix. There are multiple cup sizes to cater to women with different vaginal structure. Pads/tampons absorb blood and super-absorbent tampons cause vaginal dryness, whereas cups only collect the blood.

The menstrual cup is folded and inserted, which unfolds once inside. The cup is greased with water or any water-based fluid to reduce friction during insertion. If placed correctly, the suction allows no leakage, no restriction on physical activities and even prevents the bloody odour from wafting through, which is a common case with pads/tampons.

A menstrual cup can hold 3 times the blood absorbed by a tampon and can be worn up to 12 hours, whereas



tampons/pads have to be changed after 4-6 hours depending on the flow. The cup is removed by gently pulling on the stem until the base of the cup can be felt with the index finger. The seal is broken by pinching the base and then pulled out.

The blood is rinsed out and the cup has to be washed with soap every time before

re-insertion. It is of utmost importance to wash your hands thoroughly, to prevent vaginal bacterial infection. Disinfecting the cup by boiling is necessary before and after every monthly cycle.

If we do the math, the average woman uses at least 5 pads per month, 60 pads a year, and 300 pads in 5 years. The local

woman spends 60-80 taka per month, amounting to 3,600 - 4,800 taka in 5 years, depending on the brand of pad used.

In this era of eco-consciousness, we cannot ignore that disposable hygiene products cause excessive landfill waste. Not only are menstrual cups eco-friendly, but they are also cheaper in the long run. A branded menstrual cup is worth \$25-\$40, roughly 2,000 - 3,200 taka, which is a hefty amount but can be used for 1-5 years and even last up to 10 years if maintained properly.

Popular brands include DivaCup, OrganiCup, Lunette, and FlexiCup. OrganiCup has detailed videos on YouTube worth checking. Non-branded cups are also available but aren't recommended since they could be made from cheap materials.

The most important step here is accepting your bodily fluids and being okay with blood. The first few tries might be tricky but once comfortable, there is no going back. Menstrual cups have revolutionized the period experience for those who have given it a shot. New decade, new you, new product worth exploring to make life easier.

How to travel the old fashioned way

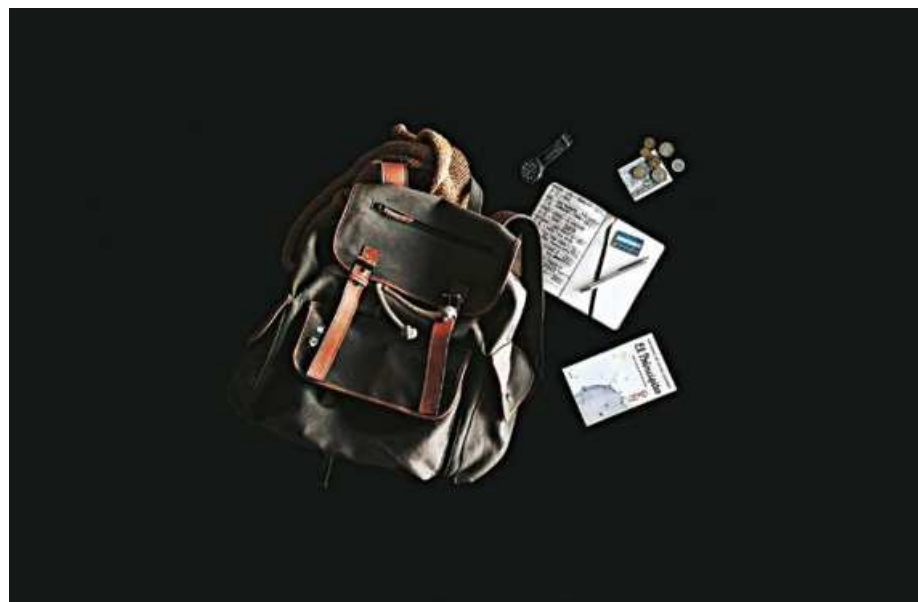
ZARIF FAIAZ

Travelling has changed quite a lot over the last few years. Maps on paper have shifted to Google Maps. TripAdvisor is now our best guide. Instagram, our new journal. Everything is designed to make our travels as hassle-free and as easy as possible.

But travelling is more than just packing your backs and just going somewhere. The beauty of travelling is also in its intricacies. The journey, the planning that goes into it, the small details of how we do it. There's a certain charm to the old school ways of travelling and it's time we rediscover the taste of it.

Maintain a journal

When was the last time you actually wrote something with a pen on paper? Do you even remember your own handwriting? Or the smell of a fresh blank notebook? Although Instagram and vlogging have taken over the job of old school journaling, nothing beats the feeling of writing down small stories in your ragged notebook, attached with photos, small tokens of your journey, rough sketches and making a scrapbook journal that speaks louder than your



Instagram stories. It shows that you cared little about what filter to use or what angle to take a photo from or how many likes you'll get. Rather you just wanted to live in the moments and carry those moments with you forever, in your own way.

Ditch TripAdvisor, talk to people

It is borderline blasphemous these days to head out somewhere without gathering everything you need to know beforehand. TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet, Travelers of Bangladesh, all of these have taken the hassle out of planning trips. But in the

process, they have also taken out the opportunity for us to truly engage with people, with the locals.

If you truly want to live the fullest while travelling and plan to do it the old fashioned way, forget about those handy websites. Get your grip on a basic itinerary and just head out. Talk to locals, mingle with them and hang out where the locals do. Get recommendations from them and you'll find that your experience will be far richer than what you'd get out of professional guide websites.

Keep a token of your travels, not souvenirs

It's no secret that souvenirs are touristy and pricy. Many travellers don't opt for touristy souvenirs, getting something incredibly local to keep the memory of that place with them forever. It could be something as insignificant as a bottle cap, but to you, that bottle cap will remind you of the bustling streets of Saigon where you stopped to have a drink in the hot summer of 2016.

There's no universal guideline on how to travel. To each, their own but in the end all that matters, is if you've truly enjoyed yourself or not. So, get out there. Do what you like. And live.